

SCHOOL TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS FROM SEPTEMBER 2020

SUMMARY AND KEY POINTS

Unless it is possible on the transport used, social distancing will **not** apply on dedicated school transport from the Autumn term 2020, in line with Government guidance. This is because:

- the overall risk to children and young people from contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low.
- Pupils do not mix with the general public on those journeys.
- dedicated school transport often carries the same group on a regular basis, and those children may also be together in school. This helps limit the number of other people with whom they come into contact.
- the predictability, which public transport does not afford, will allow for planning so that appropriate protective measures can be put in place.

Even if children are entitled to free or subsidised education transport, they should only use this transport if absolutely necessary.

If your child is entitled to free transport but will not be using it, please email school.transport@cumbria.gov.uk and provide the name, date of birth and school attended.

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting their child to maintain social distancing whilst queuing at bus stops.

All pupils should wash their hands prior to boarding the bus.

Hand Sanitiser will be provided on board the vehicle and it should be used by pupils when getting on, and getting off the bus. Please also ensure your child(ren) carry their own hand sanitiser.

Face coverings should be worn wherever possible (these will not be provided)

If your school has arranged a seating plan on the vehicle, please ensure your child is aware of this, and follows school instructions.

Children should not travel to school if they:

- are experiencing any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or sharing a household, support bubble, or having come into close contact with somebody with symptoms.
- have been advised by the NHS or local test and trace service to self-isolate.

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How do children (including those 16 years and older) travel to school/college?

- Some walk, cycle or are driven/drive to school.
- Some pay to use public transport, e.g. bus, taxi or train.
- Some pay to use commercial vehicles that only transport schoolchildren and not the general public.
- Some are entitled to free transport, arranged by the Council, on either:
 - dedicated school transport, which only carries school children.
 - public transport, where the Council funds the ticket cost.
- Some pay for a ticket on dedicated school transport where there is a spare seat.
- Some schools/colleges fund or provide transport for their pupils.

Is my child entitled to free transport?

The quickest and easiest way to check if your child is entitled to free transport is to submit an online application [here](#).

What should I do if my child won't be using their free transport from the Autumn term 2020?

If your child is entitled to free transport but will not be using it, please email school.transport@cumbria.gov.uk and provide the name, date of birth and school attended. As you have an entitlement, we will put your seat on hold until you advise us that your child will be resuming transport arrangements.

You can change your mind at any point but if you want your child to start using the free transport again you must give us 5 working days notice. Please see the contact details at the end of this document.

It is very important that the County Council is aware of which children are using Home to School transport and which vehicle they are usually on. This will also help the NHS test and trace process, if needed.

The Council will make transport arrangements as soon as possible. We apologise that very short notice may mean a delay to transport being in place.

If you decide to arrange your own transport, the Council will not reimburse your costs.

Should I pay for a concessionary ticket (Spare Seat Scheme)?

Yes, if your child requires a concessionary ticket and we have one available to sell to you then you must pay the full price. If the seat is not used, the Council reserves the right to offer the seat to other children in line with its policy. If your child will be using the Council contracted transport, then you must pay the full contribution, even if your child does not attend school every day.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw any concessionary ticket if a child entitled to free transport requires the seat, as per our policy.

How will school transport work from Autumn term 2020?

When pupils return to school, it is important that we do everything we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 between pupils as they travel to and from school. Where possible, all children should walk or cycle to school or college. Where this is not possible, driving a child to school or college or using public transport are alternative options.

Even if children are entitled to free or subsidised education transport, they should only use this transport if absolutely necessary. This will help to reduce the number of interactions between children as far as possible.

Parents and carers are responsible for supporting their child to maintain social distancing whilst queuing at bus stops.

Schools and colleges are asked to put in place appropriate queuing or other arrangements needed for picking up and dropping off children at school or college.

If your child needs your help getting into a vehicle, we recommend you limit the time you spend in the vehicle, wear a face covering and also wash your hands thoroughly before and after.

Increasing the space between pupils on transport is helpful, but because of limited transport capacity this may not always be possible, so other infection prevention control measures (such as hand-washing, wearing a face covering) become even more important.

Unless it is possible on the transport used, social distancing will **not** apply on dedicated school transport from the Autumn term 2020, in line with Government guidance. This is because:

- the overall risk to children and young people from contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low.
- Pupils do not mix with the general public on those journeys.
- dedicated school transport often carries the same group on a regular basis, and those children may also be together in school. This helps limit the number of other people with whom they come into contact.
- the predictability, which public transport does not afford, will allow for planning so that appropriate protective measures can be put in place.

The Government guidance says that having school bubbles will still bring benefits even if implemented partially, and that schools may need to allow mixing into wider groups in certain circumstances, including on transport.

There is no requirement for children to sit in their school bubble on dedicated school transport. Some children will travel with pupils from different school bubbles and also from other schools. There are not enough vehicles and drivers available to transport pupils only within their school bubbles. However, where possible, children should try to sit within their school bubbles on vehicles.

Transport will be provided as close to the normal start and end of the school day as possible, because children in different bubbles will need to travel together. It will not be possible for them to arrive at different times from one another. Schools and colleges have been made aware of this and been advised that they may need to provide a safe place for children to wait for their transport. Parents are advised to contact their child's school or college if they have any questions about this.

How will the risk of infection on dedicated school transport be reduced?

Children should not travel to school if they:

- are experiencing any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms.
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or sharing a household, support bubble, or having come into close contact with somebody with symptoms.
- have been advised by the NHS or local test and trace service to self-isolate.

Drivers or passenger assistants should not work if they meet any of the criteria above. They must go home if they begin displaying symptoms whilst at work and get a test.

If your child becomes unwell during a school day, parents/carers will be expected to arrange their collection from school or college. Dedicated school transport or public transport should not be used. Parents/carers must also contact CPCM to advise if their child becomes unwell during the school day.

All pupils should wash their hands prior to boarding the bus. Hand Sanitiser will be provided on board the vehicle and it should be used by pupils when getting on, and getting off the bus.

Where possible, the ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) will be maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents.

Vehicles will be cleaned and sanitised after each journey.

Will my child have to wear a face covering?

Public Health England recommends that children aged 11 and over wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport from the start of the Autumn term 2020. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. Government guidance also supports younger children wearing a face covering if they are able to handle them as directed.

By law, people aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport. Although, this law does not apply to dedicated school transport,

Children under the age of 3 should not wear face coverings. The wearing of face coverings for children aged 3 to 11 is supported if they are able to handle them as directed. Face coverings should not be worn by those who may not be able to handle them as directed, for example young children or those with special educational needs or disabilities, as it may increase the risk of transmission.

Parents and carers are advised to check transport providers' websites for any specific rules on face coverings. Transport providers will raise any concerns they have with the Council, who will contact schools to discuss specific issues.

Schools and colleges should have a process for pupils to remove face coverings. This should enable them to wash their hands immediately on arrival, dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin, place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag, and then **wash their hands again.**

The County Council has provided the following advice to parents and carers if they decide that their child should wear a face covering:

- Face coverings do not need to be medical grade personal protective equipment and people can make their own using scarves or other textiles. Further information regarding how to make a face covering is available [here](#).
- Coverings must cover the mouth and nose while allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably. Children should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before putting their face covering on and also before and after taking it off.
- Children should store their face covering in a plastic bag (such as a sandwich bag) when not in use. They should try not to touch the part of the face covering that has been in contact with their mouth and nose when putting it on and taking it off.
- When wearing a face covering, loose ends should be tucked away. The face covering should not be worn on top of the head or around the neck when not in use.
- You should wash any face coverings regularly. They can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent.
- Encourage children and young people not to share their face covering with anyone else.

Will the bus driver/passenger assistant wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Transport providers are expected to follow Government guidance on the use of PPE.

Drivers and passenger assistants will not normally require PPE on dedicated school transport, even if they are not able to maintain distance from the children. This is because children with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must not board dedicated school transport. They should stay at home and get a test.

Where the care of a child on dedicated school transport ordinarily requires the use of PPE, as determined by individual risk assessment this should continue as usual.

What measures will be in place for hand hygiene and cleaning?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is easy to kill when it is on skin. Children should continue to wash their hands thoroughly before and after using transport. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Children, drivers and passenger assistants should clean their hands, before boarding the transport and when arriving at school or home.

Drivers and passenger assistants may wish to use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser at intervals throughout the journey, and will always do so before and after performing tasks such as helping a child into the vehicle or handling a child's belongings. It should not normally be necessary for children to clean their hands during the journey.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach is very important. Children should carry tissues on transport and use them to catch any coughs or sneezes. Used tissues should be safely stored by the child on their person and then disposed of safely in a covered bin after leaving the vehicle. Hands should be cleaned as soon as possible.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is easy to kill on surfaces. Transport providers should clean all touchable surfaces thoroughly after each journey (especially hand rails) and undertake enhanced cleaning at the end of each day.

Transport providers should follow the cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance, available [here](#) and also refer to the transport operator guidance for information on carrying out cleaning procedures and adjusting ventilation on vehicles available [here](#).

Transport providers should keep windows on dedicated school transport open, where possible, to increase ventilation.

What will happen if someone on dedicated school transport displays symptoms or tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)?

If a driver or passenger assistant has been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms and travelled on dedicated school transport, the driver or passenger assistant should wash their hands and ensure that the transport is deep cleaned as soon as possible in line with the guidance above. It is important that there is a clear record of who was travelling on the bus in case the pupil tests positive for COVID-19. The driver and passenger assistant do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves or the pupil has tested positive.

If the symptomatic person tests positive, the local health protection team will work quickly with the family, school, Council and transport provider to identify people who have been in close contact with that person and ask them to go home and self-isolate for the advised time period. Only close contacts will need to self-isolate, not the whole household, unless the person who is a contact subsequently develops symptoms.

Close contact means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1m, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin).
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual.
- Travelled in a small vehicle, such as a car, with an infected individual.

Anyone coming into contact with someone who has symptoms must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser. If a person with symptoms has been on dedicated school transport, the vehicle must be cleaned with normal household disinfectant to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. Transport providers should follow the cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance stated above.

The Council expects drivers and passenger assistants to book a test if they display coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. The Council also expects staff to self-isolate as advised. If this means that transport cannot be provided to any pupils, then the Council will try to find alternative vehicles. However, in the worst case scenario, parents and carers may need to transport their children to school until normal arrangements can resume.

Who will make sure children follow the advice and guidance?

Transport drivers must focus on driving vehicles safely, and so are not responsible for overseeing whether children are following advice and guidance. Continued failure of pupils to follow advice and guidance may be dealt with in accordance with the behaviour policy, available [here](#).

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring children understand how to use transport safely, and children themselves are responsible for acting upon this, where they are able to.

Dedicated school transport providers are being asked to put signs in all vehicles with key messages for pupils to follow.

The Council's transport inspection team will continue to spot-check transport providers' compliance with this summary guidance and current Government guidance for Transport to school and other places of education.

My child attends a special school – will their transport be different?

The information above applies to dedicated special school transport as well, for instance the children will not necessarily be transported in bubbles or arrive at staggered times. The Council will work directly with schools and transport providers to understand if there are any children that are very medically vulnerable that may need different transport arrangements, and these may be supported for an agreed time period, where possible.

My child uses transport provided by their school – what should they do?

You should contact your school to understand their arrangements, if you have any questions. Arrangements should be in line with Government guidance. If the school will not be operating their own transport, then the Council will only be able to provide transport for those children that are entitled under the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

Where can I find further information and guidance?

Government guidance for the full opening of schools for Autumn term 2020 can be found [here](#).

Government guidance for dedicated school transport can be accessed [here](#).

Government guidance for pupils using public transport is available [here](#).

School transport advice and information

T: 01228 226428

E: school.transport@cumbria.gov.uk

W: www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/schooltransport

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